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# Perceptions And Attitudes Of Pc And Multiculturalism

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*Eastern Illinois University*

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PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF PC  
AND MULTICULTURALISM

GOKEN

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**Perceptions and Attitudes of PC and Multiculturalism**

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(TITLE)

BY

**Matthew Brent Goken**

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

---

**Master of Arts**

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

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### **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated in the loving memory of my grandmother, Mable Goken. Mimi was a fine woman who at the age of 84 said she'd like to take a try at graduate school too. Her love, support, encouragement, and inspiration taught me that life is what you make of it, so why not make the best life you can?

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Running Head: PC

**Perceptions and Attitudes of PC and Multiculturalism**

**Matthew Brent Goken**

**Eastern Illinois University**

### Abstract

Research has shown that political correctness and multiculturalism are becoming more prevalent issues on U.S. college and university campuses. While discussion is plentiful concerning both issues, few researchers have attempted to evaluate what students' attitudes are concerning political correctness as compared to multiculturalism. Many universities are now attempting to address the PC issue by creating policies intended to make students more "sensitive" to the issues surrounding both political correctness and multiculturalism.

The purpose of the present study is to measure the perceptions and attitudes concerning political correctness and multiculturalism on Eastern Illinois University's campus. A 40-item survey was distributed to 431 undergraduate and graduate students across the curriculum on Eastern's campus. Results revealed important differences between freshmen and seniors, between students reporting to be conservatives and liberals, as well as differences between the genders.

Freshmen, it was discovered, seemed to support both the concepts of political correctness and multiculturalism more readily than their senior level counterparts. Conservatives are less likely to be in favor of political correctness or multiculturalism, while Liberals view both terms in a positive manner. Females were in support of political

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correctness and tend to feel more comfortable in practicing political correctness and in using politically correct terminology than their male counterparts.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction and Literature Review

#### Introduction

Debate over political correctness has been long and tedious. Choi & Murphy (1992) define political correctness as, "consisting of theories and practices that are designed to end injustices based on sex, race, class, and other social variables" (p. 2). Recent discussion among the United States' academic leaders of higher education has shown considerable interest in the topic of political correctness or "PC." Grossberg (1992) characterizes the debate over political correctness as a "culture war, with culture as both the weapon and the prize" (p. 149). He maintains that communication scholars have important things to say in and about the debate, yet few have been allowed to state their position on PC. Grossberg also states that the PC issue has so many sides that it, "would be difficult to construct a coherent interpretation of PC, and even harder pressed to define some standard set of responses that might be correlated with different political positions" (p. 149).

While discussion of PC is plentiful, quantitative research on the subject is lacking. Choi & Murphy (1992) argue that research is scarce because of a failure to combine a scientific approach with a philosophical approach when conducting research on the issue. As the authors state, "most persons believe that science and technology are



divorced from prejudice and power" (p. x).

Along with political correctness, multiculturalism has also created controversy. Bernstein (1994) defines multiculturalism as, "a sensitivity of openness to the enormous cultural differences that has always existed in American life, but whose fullness has been suppressed by the dominant European culture" (p. 45). Much work has been published on the topic of multiculturalism. Much like PC, most of the research on multiculturalism lacks a quantitative base. The focus of many of these research articles is creating an appropriate definition for both multiculturalism and political correctness.

#### Review of Literature

While quantitative research on the subjects of political correctness and multiculturalism is lacking, numerous discussions have been published. This literature review is designed to analyze the different aspects of the PC issue, as well as to highlight academic perceptions of multiculturalism.

First, a brief history of the PC movement is provided. Second, case studies of different universities' positions on the issue are discussed. Third, the present attitudes about political correctness on university campuses are presented. Finally, several works involving the issue of multiculturalism and its effects on American Higher Education are analyzed.

History of the PC Movement. Choi & Murphy (1992) focus on the philosophy of the PC movement, and offer a brief history of the issue. The authors argue that since the late 1980's, the issue of political correctness has, "had a prominent place in American culture" (p. 1). Their study centers around a textual analysis of five popular magazines-- New York Magazine, The New Republic, Newsweek, The Atlantic, and Time.

Choi & Murphy's research was conducted in three primary steps. First, five popular magazines were selected for a textual analysis of stories contained in the magazines. Second, magazine articles from the 1960's, 1980's, and 1990's of each of the five magazines were analyzed for use in a comparison of the different magazines' treatments of the issue of political correctness. Finally, the data were collected to determine differences for comparison of the reporting for the three decades.

Results showed that political correctness had been a prevailing influence in American culture since the 1960's. The authors state, "Western culture was analyzed and blamed on the liberal agenda that has been instituted since the 1960's" (p. 1). The researchers also found that the issues of affirmative action, educational reform, and permissiveness have gradually been placed on the American culture's agenda since the 1960's.

While the issue of political correctness has become an

increasingly "hot topic" of American culture, the PC movement has also affected the way Americans view language. Corbett (1994) attempted to identify differences in language from the 1960's to the present.

Corbett's textual analysis centers around articles published in British special education literature. The author's purpose was to determine whether the PC movement had been gradual or expedient in its approach to the attitudes of teaching special education and the language surrounding individuals with disabilities. Results showed that vocabulary, images, and attitudes dealing with individuals with disabilities have all changed dramatically throughout the past three decades. Corbett also asserts that, "the PC movement has also affected individuals with disabilities in their attitudes and in the way they behave" (p. 17).

Taking research of attitudes a step further, Beckwith and Bauman (1993) attempt to define the attitudes of the PC movement. The authors argue that the PC movement has "brought the most controversy to the American college campus and public education since the turbulent 1960's" (p. 9). Beckwith and Bauman's study involved two primary steps. First, literature involving the PC movement from the 1960's to the 1990's was selected for analysis. Second, the authors did a textual analysis of the literature to determine the most noticeable themes associated with the PC

movement and the multiculturalism movement.

The researchers define multiculturalism as, "a philosophy of education that stresses the unique contributions of different cultures to the history of the world" (p. 11). Beckwith and Bauman identified three radical multicultural beliefs that make three assumptions. First, all cultures have contributed equally to the history of the human race. Second, "the ideas of those produced by members of one's own ethnic or racial group are easier for one to understand and comprehend." Finally, every judgement can be reduced to a "cultural perspective." Beckwith and Bauman also discovered that the PC movement is, "typically politically leftist, although as was evident in some of the readings, some of its harshest critics are on the political left" (p. 9).

Berman (1992) also researched the PC movement to discover both the origins and nature of the debate. Berman argues that, "the national debate over 'political correctness' began in the fall of 1990 with a small innocuous-seeming article in the New York Times" (p. 1). Berman also states that within a few weeks the topic of political correctness was, "plastered across all of the covers of popular magazines" (p.1).

The PC movement, Berman argues, began soon after the publishing of Dinesh D'Souza's book, Illiberal Education, a work highly critical of multiculturalism. The word political

correctness, Berman asserts, was "originally an approving phrase on the Leninist left to denote someone who steadfastly toed the partly line" (p. 5). PC movement has derived from two phases that occurred during the 1960's. The freedom of the individual to fight against the system became popular. The second phase involved opposition to the liberal humanistic system of thought. This phase, in essence, said that, "liberal humanism is a deception" (p. 6). The second phase also has been referred to as "ultra-radicalism," and involved postmodern and poststructuralist modes of thought.

D'Souza (1991) provided a critique of the implications of political correctness on the American university campus. He postulated that the university has not created much disharmony since the late 1960's and early 1970's. D'Souza's study involved interviewing several prominent university officials to get their renditions of the state of politics on race and gender. D'Souza asserts that the 1980's created a generation of young people who lack social consciousness, and care mainly about careers and making money. However, D'Souza also states that the campus society is attempting to re-define the state of the American College Campus.

Case Studies Analyses. While D'Souza's (1991) analysis of the state of the American College does include an analysis of the historical factors involved with political correctness; his study primarily focuses on the policies presently being enforced by several prominent universities.

The primary focus of D'Souza's study was to identify the admissions policies, racial incidents, teaching strategies, attitudes, and multicultural policies of each university. D'Souza's study involved assembling information from a wide array of first-hand sources. Two research assistants aided the researcher in his study, and helped in assembling much of the data, setting up interviews, preparing questions, and checking facts.

Numerous university officials, faculty, and students helped with references, background information, press clippings, internal documents, and interviews. Six universities were analyzed: Emory, Berkely, Howard, Michigan, Duke, and Harvard.

D'Souza's results showed that overall, the academic programs at these universities reflect a, "predominant white, male, European, and heterosexual mentality which, by its very nature is inescapably racist, indisputably sexist and manifestly homophobic" (p. 244). After interviewing hundreds of minority students, D'Souza came to the conclusion that, "student minorities leave the college atmosphere with feelings of gloom about the prospect of race relations" (p. 23). Both of these findings suggest a contradiction in D'Souza's primary thesis: multiculturalism and political correctness have gone too far by limiting freedom of speech. In his discussion, D'Souza also argues that universities need to define what they mean by diversity, as that definition

should be, "diversity of (p. 230).

D'Souza also found that, "at Michigan, the University of Connecticut, Stanford, and Emory, some schools go so far as to outlaw racially or sexually stigmatizing remarks-- even 'misdirected laughter'" (p. 231). Findings also revealed that universities as a whole do take very seriously the issue of racial under-representation-- "yet these same universities also encourage homogeneous attitudes about many issues" (p. 231). D'Souza's research divulged the fact that black and hispanics are often admitted into the university on different sets of standards. Many of the six universities, D'Souza found, also participate in "cultural sensitivity" training programs to address the issues of multiculturalism and political correctness. While all of the universities focused on diversity of student population, the ways in which these institutions addressed political correctness seemed to undermine the positive philosophy involved with political correctness and multiculturalism.

While policies of political correctness and "sensitivity" training might be on the rise, Willard (1993) attempted to create discussion of changing the curriculum at Valencia College in Valencia, Florida. The researcher's goal was to, "revise the traditional eurocentric curriculum to render it more inclusive and multicultural in nature" (p. 2). Willard's study involved selecting faculty members



on a volunteer basis to participate in a discussion dealing with the revision of the curriculum. Willard next had faculty members identify and evaluate institutional and personal assumptions, biases, and values, and formed guiding principles for curriculum revision by consensus. The data were then collected for analysis of faculty members' attitudes' to changing the curriculum.

Results showed that while some faculty members saw no need to change the curriculum, the majority participating in the revision felt, "multiculturalism is not a passing political trend, but rather a reflection of an emerging world community which will require its members to navigate differences" (p. 113). Most participants viewed the word "multiculturalism" as being politically charged. The faculty then defined their approach to multiculturalism as, "an intent to include previously excluded groups in curriculum content and teaching methods; to make cultural stories as complete as possible; to recognize academic integrity; and to reflect the cultural and ethnic composition of the student population" (p. 113).

Bergman and Surrey (1993) took research of the PC policies of universities a step further by analyzing the sex-roles and identity policies at universities. Results of Bergman and Surrey's case study found that, "on campus, as in society, male-centered paradigms of sex role and identity are being challenged" (p. 12). By conducting a

psychological analysis of the genders, the researchers found that there are several areas of conflict being addressed by university policies. Those areas of conflict between male and female students include stereotypes and political correctness, violence and rape, hostility toward women, the economy, commitment, and identity" (p. 18).

Restructuring public higher education has also become the topic of importance to Solomon and Solomon (1993). Their research delved into ways to restructure public higher education in the United States to address the growing interest in political correctness. The researchers' study involved qualitative research in which interviews were conducted with several prominent academic officials. Officials were asked to make suggestions for restructuring the school system to make it more open to diversity and multiculturalism. These suggestions were then collected, and a synthesis of ideas was created.

Results show that there is a trend to institute an open-admissions policy to allow more people an opportunity for a college education. The study also confirmed that in order to restructure the school system, universities must first re-evaluate the mission of the university in a democratic society. The mission, the researchers suggest, should reflect a, "marketplace of ideas" (p. 313).

Carey (1992) also researched the idea of reforming the institute of higher learning. Carey states, "while in truth

most practitioners of cultural studies are of the Left, there is virtually no agreement among them as to what is Left" (p. 57). Carey argues that while liberals are known for encouraging cultural sensitivity in language and in action, few actually understand what position their political party takes or who is a member of that position.

Carey also discusses the idea of cultural studies. Research has shown that cultural studies are vulnerable to the assault from the Right because the two theoretical weaknesses in its formation" (p. 59). First, as regards the idea of a common culture and, second, the role of ideology within that culture. Carey terms this position as a "desertion of a common culture" (p. 59).

Carey also argues that many of the critics of political correctness are not credible sources as they, "are not affiliated with the university system" (p. 65). Finally, Carey asserts that both sides in the debate are failing to seize the, "fundamental problems or that they proceed from an adequate analysis of the university as an institution" (p. 67).

Present Attitudes. The sides in the debate of political correctness are not easily identifiable, however, it is necessary to evaluate the attitudes on the issue in order to provide some foundation for the PC issue. Shea (1994) analyzed the attitudes of students on college campuses through qualitative interviews. The findings of

Shea's study suggest that, "a growing number of college students report that campus judicial systems are more concerned with political correctness than with fairness" (p. 37). Shea postulates that students overwhelmingly feel that the systems are unfair, "regardless of the discipline issue, and complain about the secrecy of proceedings" (p. 38). The research also concludes that a shift from a paternalistic discipline policy to a legalistic one is becoming a growing trend within the university system. This trend, to create programs, rules, and regulations designed to end injustices, was not widely supported by students as they felt the system inhibited freedom of speech and placed limits on opportunity for certain groups within the student population.

Another higher education report, published by Poch (1994) found startling results. The report summarizes a study of the attitudes and perceptions of academic freedom among members of the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges. Results showed that faculty members and administrators fully understand the issues and contexts that surround academic freedom in American higher education. The report also found that the basic notion of academic freedom, stemming from the 1940 "Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure," should be re-evaluated. The U.S. Supreme Court, after all, has never granted academic

freedom full constitutional status.

The findings of Shea's study also revealed a list of issues now creating conflict for academic freedom. Those issues identified are: limits on artistic expression, limitations initiated by church related colleges and universities, subpoenaed research information, and political correctness. Results also reaffirmed that, "while faculty members at public educational institutions may enjoy some constitutional protection, faculty at private schools must rely mainly on contractual safeguards" (p. 57).

Kessler-Harris (1992) also defined the attitudes of many in the dispute over political correctness. Her work focused on the perspective of the women's studies program on the issue. Kessler-Harris states, "as a movement, political correctness is rarely benign" (p. 794). Kessler-Harris contends that the women's studies program is, "with cause, sometimes cast as a villain by its critics in the PC debates, as it naturally casts its lot on the side of multiculturalism" (p. 794). The author also states that feminist thought and feminists' efforts have long been against the traditional disciplinary framework that emphasize "Western Civilization."

Kessler-Harris argues that while the Feminist Movement has been labeled as one of the PC Movement's largest supporters, "most female academics are inordinately sensitive to free speech issues" (p. 795). The author claims

that the division of positions in the women's studies program are just as diverse on the subject of PC as any other group. She states, "our differences overlap and are sometimes blurred" (p. 798).

While debate over political correctness is complex, some researchers are attempting to focus it on major problems within the present system of education. Corbett (1994) analyzed several educational programs to identify the problems associated with integrating a politically correct education system.

Corbett proclaims there is, "too much emphasis on developing a nonsexist, antibias, peace-centered, politically correct day-care center curriculum" (p. 54). The messages children are receiving from emphasis on political correctness is restricting children's imagination, creativity, and desires. Corbett also argues that this emphasis on PC is leading to an educator-imposed bias in the curriculum. Corbett asserts, "educators should encourage children to engage in developmentally appropriate play activities instead of arbitrarily prohibiting war toys and Barbie dolls" (p. 58).

On the other hand, Burns (1994) argues that colleges and universities are not being influenced by the PC movement. Burns attempted to find whether or not the PC movement has influenced the college and university campus. Burn's study consisted of a textual analysis of several policies present

in many universities and colleges. Burns selected a group of colleges and universities to analyze the different institutions' patterns in admissions, hiring practices, faculty pay, tenure, promotions, and the climate for minorities.

Results confirmed Burn's assumption that the PC movement was not as influential on college and university campuses as many studies suggest. Results also found that the climate for minorities and especially women at the selected colleges and universities was not conducive to a "politically correct" climate. Burns argues that the results, "are offered as illustrations of the barriers to equality in institutions of higher education" (p. 55).

While some do not see the influence of PC on higher education, others still assert that the sides have been deeply defined. Shelton's (1994) study revolved around the issue of the media's framing of the PC debate as an educational issue. Shelton attempted to identify the two basic sides and their positions by conducting a textual analysis of three popular magazines: Time, Newsweek, The New Republic.

Results showed that, "an objective assessment of the politically correct movement on college campuses casts much doubt on the positions advanced by conservative critics in the popular media" (p. 105). For the most part, the findings suggest, the right-wing conservative critics have painted a



portrait of the issue of political correctness as being an organized movement that threatens free speech. Shelton argues, "drawing on a body of 'outrageous' cases, the conservatives have viewed the issue as being a conspiracy threatening the very foundation of American society" (p. 106).

Multiculturalism and American Education. While many researchers have separate definitions for multiculturalism and political correctness, others use the two terms interchangeably. In recent years, however there has been much discussion about separating the two terms as many view them as having opposite meanings. Research conducted thus far has found that while multiculturalism and political correctness are related, the former has a positive connotation, the latter a negative connotation (Shapiro & Purpel, 1993). This section of the literature review is designed to discuss the perceptions and attitudes involving the concept of multiculturalism.

Many colleges and universities in an effort to increase the appreciation of cultures within the campus have instituted speech codes and ordinances that protect the different ethnicities, genders, races and social classes. (Siggelkow, 1991). Obiakor (1994) addressed the question of how American higher education infused multiculturalism and diversity into the public education curriculum. Obiakor argues that multiculturalism is not a fad, "but a dynamic

framework that values the complex diversity of America's pluralistic society" (p. 14). Further, Obiakor postulates, the infusion of multiculturalism into higher education enhances the quality of education and exposes students to previously ignored or under-represented ideas and points of view.

Gasbarro and Matthews (1994) took research dealing with how multiculturalism has affected American Higher Education a step further by analyzing teachers' perceptions of multiculturalism. The purpose of their study was twofold: first, to investigate new teachers' perceptions of needs for multicultural education in teacher preparation programs; and second, to better understand the meanings new teachers give to the term multiculturalism.

Gasbarro and Matthew's study centered around interviews conducted with nine practicing teachers and nine recent university graduates. The interviews focused on their recommendations for teacher education, their definitions of the term multiculturalism, and their rankings of a series of goals based on a typology of approaches to multicultural education. Themes in responses and similarities and differences between teachers' views explicated in the literature on multicultural education were sought.

Results showed that teachers' recommendations included references to: course work in multicultural content, knowledge construction, and pedagogy; field experiences; and

qualifications and characteristics of teacher education faculty. Gasbarro and Matthew also found teachers to define multiculturalism as, "involving students of all backgrounds and understanding perspectives of different groups" (p. 32). Teachers' ranked the goal of teaching human relations and social harmony as highest in priority, and they ranked teaching students to adapt to the norms of the dominant culture as last in priority.

While teachers seem supportive of a multicultural base to education, Villalpando (1994) attempted to define students' perceptions of multiculturalism in American education. Villalpando's research involved a longitudinal study of 15,600 college students who were freshmen in 1985 and were followed up in 1989. The respondents were either African American, Mexican American, Asian American, or White. His study attempted to determine students' satisfaction with college based on their race and course materials, as well as their perceptions of how multiculturalism had influenced their college careers.

Villalpando found that students with high satisfaction were those who attended racial/cultural awareness workshops. Every group of students reported that they were most positively affected by faculty's use of instructional methodology that included content on ethnic and racial issues, gender, or race. Furthermore, it was found that colleges/universities who place emphasis on multiculturalism

also reported having great satisfaction among students. Finally, it was determined that perceptions of multiculturalism changed in a positive manner as far as comparing freshmen to seniors. Freshmen seemed less supportive of multiculturalism and were far more apathetic as compared to their senior counterparts.

Edlefson and Wagstaff (1994) also delved into perceptions of multiculturalism in American Education. Their pilot study explored the efficacy of a concept multicultural organization and of a survey self-study guide designed for colleges of education in research institutions. The study was designed to determine how diversity affected a university's treatment of multiculturalism in research efforts conducted by faculty.

The survey study guide was distributed to 27 deans of colleges of education at 27 institutions. Sixteen surveys were returned. Analysis showed that most institutions were not very diverse and that only five of the respondents' schools, colleges, or departments of education came close to mirroring the racial and ethnic makeup of the geographical region they served. The institutions whose demographics were least diverse were more likely to have adopted policy statements that signal their intention to become more diverse. Respondents whose school/program demographics were most diverse tended to pay more attention to multicultural issues and activities in their faculty's efforts in research,

teaching, and service. Data also showed a relationship between diversity of the people in the institution and multiculturalism in core activities.

While many institutions have created curricula based on multiculturalism, there are still opponents of creating such an emphasis on multiculturalism in American Education. Bernstein (1994) argues that multiculturalism in education, because it is viewed as such a virtuous undertaking, is actually creating another form of tyranny, one that limits discussion, inhibits free expression, and disguises questionable interpretations and analyses as indisputable truths. As Bernstein asserts, "multiculturalism is portrayed as creating dogmatic assertions, wishful thinking, and pseudoscientific pronouncements about race and sex" (p. 90).

Bernstein also argues that a multicultural education base operates, "via intimidation and intellectual decree... it rewrites history" (p. 90). Bernstein basically characterizes multiculturalism as a negative influence in American Higher Education that is a universe of, "ambitious good intentions that has veered off the high road of respect for difference and plunged into a foggy chasm of dogmatic assertions toward a dictatorship of virtue" (p. 91).

Literature Review Conclusions. Research has shown the issues of political correctness and multiculturalism to be diverse disputes with a plethora of different positions. Research thus far has outlined many perspectives of both

multiculturalism and PC. The sides have been identified, and the dispute seems to divide males and females, liberals and conservatives, and between freshmen and seniors at colleges and universities. The question is, however, how have these two issues affected higher education? One thing is obvious: the sides of the issue are defined, policies are being instituted, and attitudes are still being created dealing with the issues of multiculturalism and political correctness.

Research Questions. For the current study, the following research questions were identified to examine the attitudes and perceptions of Eastern Illinois University students on both the topics of political correctness and multiculturalism.

- RQ1: What are the perceptions of Eastern Illinois University students concerning the topic of political correctness?
- RQ2: What are the perceptions of Eastern Illinois University students concerning the topic of multiculturalism?
- RQ3: Are there gender differences in relation to perceptions about political correctness?
- RQ4: Are there gender differences in relation to perceptions about multiculturalism?
- RQ5: Does political affiliation have any effect on the way students report to view political correctness?

RQ6: Does political affiliation have any effect on the way students report to view multiculturalism?

RQ7: Are there differences in relation to class standing in perceptions of political correctness?

RQ8: Are there differences in relation to class standing in perceptions of multiculturalism?

Research questions were selected for this study instead of hypotheses, as few quantitative instruments have been used in research about multiculturalism and political correctness. Answering these research questions will advance a more reliable testing instrument that can be used to determine, accurately, the perceptions of students.



## Chapter 2

### Methodology

The design for this study consisted of one self-report measure. The survey was originally produced, as few instruments have been designed to test perceptions and attitudes of both political correctness and multiculturalism (See Appendix A).

The survey consisted of 35 items concerning attitudes and perceptions about political correctness and multiculturalism in communication situations at Eastern Illinois University. Using a Likert scale as a response format, the survey was designed to focus on both the negative and positive attitudes and perceptions surrounding political correctness and multiculturalism. The primary purpose of the present study was to determine subjects' positions on political correctness and multiculturalism, as well as their comfort level in incorporating a multicultural and PC base to their communication with others.

In addition to the 35 items pertaining to PC and multiculturalism, subjects were asked to identify their year in school, gender, political affiliation, race, and age range. These demographics were included in the instrument as class standing, gender, and political affiliation were all incorporated into the research questions. Race and age range were included to further describe the demographics of the general sample.

Pilot Study. Subjects for the study consisted of 104 introduction to public speaking students on the campus at Eastern Illinois University. The survey used for the pilot study included a 19-item instrument with questions pertaining to perceptions and attitudes about political correctness. Each participant was given a survey, a computerized sheet for recording responses, and a pencil. Participants were told to record their first impressions and to work quickly. Data were collected during for one week. Descriptive analyses were conducted after the data were collected.

Of the entire sample, consisting of 104 participants, many interesting results were found. A large percentage of "neutral" responses were observed on several items. Results revealed important differences between students reporting to be conservatives and liberals, as well as differences between genders. Conservatives, it was discovered, seem more supportive of the concept of political correctness than their neutral counterparts. Females were in support of political correctness and tended to feel more comfortable in practicing political correctness and in using PC terminology than their male counterparts.

The limitations of this pilot study stemmed primarily from its population. First, the sample was selected for its accessibility and convenience, and not necessarily for its equal distribution of demographic characteristics. Due to this fact, the population had an overwhelmingly high

percentage of sophomore and freshman respondents, a very low percentage of diversity in races, and an unequal proportion of males to females. Further, the size of the sample could have been expanded to provide a more accurate depiction of the attitudes concerning political correctness at Eastern Illinois University.

Present Study. The present study was designed to lessen the number of the aforementioned limitations while attempting to replicate results found in the pilot study. In order to lessen the limitations, the number of respondents was increased. An equal distribution of males to females, as well as freshmen to seniors was also sought. By increasing the sample size and equalizing the distribution of classes, the results could be more readily generalizable and seen as more valid and reliable.

Subjects for this study consisted of 431 undergraduate and graduate student volunteers at Eastern Illinois University who were enrolled in a variety of courses across the curriculum. Demographic information revealed that of the 431 subjects, 23.7% were freshmen, 23.0% were sophomore, 23.2% were juniors, 23.2% were seniors, and 7.0% reported graduate class standing.

Thirty-six percent of the sample were male and 62.6% were female. In terms of political affiliation, 24.8% considered themselves conservative in political affiliation, 26.9% claimed liberal affiliation, 36.9% considered themselves independent, and

10.2% marked "other" as their choice for political affiliation. Also of the chosen population, 84.4% were white, 5.8% were African-American, 3.2% were Hispanic, and 1.6% were Native American in ethnic background. The primary age range for the participants was 19-23 years. Each participant was given a survey containing the 40-items, a computerized sheet for recording responses, and a pencil. Participants were again told to record their first impressions and to work quickly. The average time taken to fill out the survey was about fifteen minutes, although seniors and graduate students typically took anywhere from 15-20 minutes to complete.

Data were collected during a three-week period. Both descriptive and statistical analyses were conducted. Statistical analyses involved grouping the survey questions into four categories that focused on five separate issues: discrimination, diversity, speech codes, multiculturalism, and political correctness. The Likert scale used was recoded so that a high score would equal strong agreement, and a low score would equal low agreement. After the items were grouped and the scale was recoded, t-tests and correlations were computed to further describe the results of the study.

### Chapter 3

#### Results

Less than .002 data were missing out of the subjects, and most of this was due to not noting demographic information or omitting responses on questions. The response sheets that lacked necessary demographic information were not submitted for analysis as no assumption would be made in terms of year in school, gender, political affiliation, race or age range. Missing data from the multiculturalism and political correctness sections were counted in the "undecided" category (See Appendix B for Means).

Descriptive Analyses. The descriptive analyses of this section focused first on the general sample, second between freshmen and seniors, third between males and females, and finally, between liberals and conservatives. Results were analyzed to determine which questions had the highest percentages of agreement or disagreement among the general sample. Each of the analyses revealed many interesting findings.

The general sample findings revealed support for both multicultural education and multiculturalism as a concept (See Table 1). Eighty-nine percent of those surveyed reported either strong agreement or agreement that it is good to have a diverse student body. Three quarters of the subjects stated that they believed in multiculturalism. Subjects also reported strong support (76%) for the statement, "it is a worthwhile goal to have a multicultural campus." Finally,

61% of all students surveyed feel that E.I.U. needs to place more emphasis on education involving the topic of diversity.

Table 1

Survey Results by Percentage

Question	SA/A	Undecided	D/SD
1	60.8	13.9	25.0
2	84.3	8.8	6.1
3	80.3	13.5	5.7
4	85.4	9.0	4.7
7	55.2	21.1	23.6
8	89.1	6.3	4.4
10	66.4	17.6	15.8
13	60.8	27.6	10.5
15	61.0	20.0	19.0
17	71.0	20.9	7.9
20	18.8	23.0	58.3
24	50.3	22.3	27.0
26	58.3	26.5	14.6
27	74.5	18.1	7.2
29	76.1	15.5	8.1
31	76.8	14.8	8.1
32	65.4	21.8	12.8

SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

When analyzing the demographic of class standing, it became evident that major differences between freshmen and seniors existed (See Table 2).

Table 2  
Survey Results Between Freshmen and Seniors

Class Standing	Question	SA/A	Undecided	SD/D
Freshmen	1	51.5	20.8	27.8
Seniors	1	75.0	9.0	16.0
Freshmen	5	15.9	33.7	50.0
Seniors	5	8.0	31.0	61.0
Freshmen	9	58.4	23.8	17.9
Seniors	9	51.0	13.0	36.0
Freshmen	12	16.9	48.5	34.7
Seniors	12	22.0	35.0	43.0
Freshmen	16	25.8	30.7	43.6
Seniors	16	43.0	25.0	32.0
Freshmen	33	16.9	38.6	44.6
Seniors	33	18.0	27.0	55.0
Freshmen	35	12.9	59.4	27.8
Seniors	35	13.0	47.0	40.0

SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

The issue of neutrality among freshmen was far more evident than their senior counterparts. Freshmen seemed



less aware of cultural situations, E.I.U. diversity, communication between races, and communication between the genders. Seniors, it was found, are less neutral, have stronger feelings overall --both negative and positive-- and seem to highly support the need for education about cultures and diversity.

Differences between males and females also existed in students' responses' to the survey (See Table 3).

Table 3

A Comparison Between Males and Females

Gender	Question	SA/A	Undecided	SD/D
Males	1	49.0	12.9	38.1
Females	1	68.1	14.4	17.4
Males	8	81.9	10.3	7.8
Females	8	94.1	3.3	2.6
Males	10	56.8	21.3	21.9
Females	10	72.6	15.6	11.8
Males	18	47.8	30.3	21.3
Females	18	60.0	27.0	13.0
Males	27	65.1	20.6	13.5
Females	27	79.6	16.7	3.7
Males	31	67.1	18.7	13.6
Females	31	84.1	11.5	4.1
Males	32	58.0	24.5	17.4
Females	32	70.4	20.4	9.3



Females, according to their responses, agree (68%) with the statement that women of the 1990's are discriminated against, whereas, males are in less agreement (49%) and over one-third disagree or strong disagree. Females are far more supportive of having a diverse student body than their male counterparts. Females also feel (72%) the University should place more emphasis on communication between races. Males are in less agreement (47%). More females have a positive perception (60%) involving political correctness, and are more likely to believe in multiculturalism (80%) and support universities who promote multicultural education. Males have less supportive perceptions and attitudes about PC, multiculturalism, and multicultural education.

The final descriptive analysis involved comparing political affiliations. Liberals and conservatives were selected to answer research question 7 and 8. As was expected, liberals seemed far more supportive of both political correctness and multiculturalism. Conservatives did not agree as strongly that the two terms were positive concepts, that certain social groups are discriminated against, and that the University should place more emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism. The strongest disagreement is found on the issue of whether courses on diversity should be required. Half of all liberals reported strong support for requiring courses on diversity, whereas, half of all conservatives surveyed reported strong disapproval (See Table 4).

Table 4A Comparison Between Liberals and Conservatives

Pol. Affiliation	Question	SA/A	Undecided	SD/D
Liberal	1	69.0	13.8	17.2
Conservative	1	56.7	11.3	32.1
Liberal	2	94.8	4.3	.9
Conservative	2	73.6	15.1	11.3
Liberal	6	41.4	31.0	27.6
Conservative	6	18.9	29.2	51.9
Liberal	7	63.0	23.3	13.8
Conservative	7	41.5	52.8	38.7
Liberal	10	77.6	14.7	7.8
Conservative	10	53.8	19.8	25.5
Liberal	16	53.5	14.7	31.0
Conservative	16	25.5	23.6	50.9
Liberal	29	81.9	9.5	8.7
Conservative	29	67.0	21.7	11.3
Liberal	32	75.8	15.5	8.6
Conservative	32	51.9	26.4	21.7

Liberals and Conservatives did agree on certain issues. For instance, both political affiliations agreed that a speech code would hamper freedom of speech. Both agree that it is good to have a diverse study body.

Statistical Analyses. In an effort to further define the perceptions and attitudes of Eastern Illinois University students about political correctness and multiculturalism, t-tests and correlations were computed. Many interesting findings were revealed (See Table 5).

Table 5

A Comparison Between Males and Females

Variable	Number Of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	T Value	DF	2-tail Prob.
PC						
Males	155	20.0129	3.490	-4.92	423	.001
Females	270	21.6222	3.095	-4.43	423	.001
MC						
Males	155	23.7806	4.252	-4.43	423	.001
Females	270	25.3963	3.206	-4.43	423	.001
DISCRIMINATION						
Males	155	16.9677	4.307	-3.78	423	.001
Females	270	18.4519	3.636	-3.78	423	.001
DIVERSITY						
Males	155	9.9548	2.688	-5.66	423	.001
Females	270	11.3593	2.323	-5.66	423	.001
SPEECH CODES						
Males	155	7.0774	2.753	-4.55	423	.001
Females	270	8.2481	2.430	-4.55	423	.001

T-tests and correlations also revealed important differences in the ways in which freshmen and seniors view political correctness and discrimination (See Table 6).

Table 6

A Comparison Between Freshmen and Seniors

Variable	Number Of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	T Score	DF	2-tail Prob.
PC						
Freshmen	102	21.6275	2.921	1.97	200	.050
Seniors	100	20.7300	3.524	1.97	200	.050
DISCRIMINATION						
Freshmen	102	17.0686	3.533	-3.85	200	.001
Seniors	100	18.9700	3.477	-3.85	200	.001

Fewer differences existed between freshmen and seniors on the issues of multiculturalism, diversity and the use of speech codes. While there were only two significant findings among seniors and freshmen, findings suggest that liberals and conservatives differ on every issue treated. Every grouping of questions treated to t-tests and correlations proved to be very significant between liberals and conservatives (See Table 7).

Table 7A Comparison Between Conservatives and Liberals

Variable	Number Of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	T Value	DF	2-tail Prob.
<b>PC</b>						
Conserv	107	20.4579	3.777	-2.78	221	.006
Liberal	116	21.7414	3.104	-2.78	221	.006
<b>MC</b>						
Conserv	107	23.4953	4.008	-4.30	221	.001
Liberal	116	25.6897	3.620	-4.30	221	.001
<b>DISCRIMINATION</b>						
Conserv	107	16.3458	4.350	-5.76	221	.001
Liberal	116	19.3534	3.429	-5.76	221	.001
<b>DIVERSITY</b>						
Conserv	107	9.6729	2.726	-6.12	221	.001
Liberal	116	11.7328	2.293	-6.12	221	.001
<b>SPEECH CODES</b>						
Conserv	107	7.2710	2.648	-2.57	221	.001
Liberal	116	8.1897	2.693	-2.57	221	.001

After conducting the t-tests, a correlation between multiculturalism and political correctness was computed. The Pearson correlation coefficient resulted in the score of: .3513 suggesting that multiculturalism and political correctness are perceived as being related.

## Chapter 4

### Discussion and Conclusion

Research Questions One and Two. While many inferences could be made from the data provided, one overwhelming message can be concluded from this study: Eastern Illinois University students seem to have very strong perceptions about multiculturalism and PC, and support an education with a multicultural base. This study has proven, by quantitative means, that differences do exist between freshmen and seniors, between males and females, and between liberals and conservatives. It is obvious by the findings provided that both the issues of political correctness and multiculturalism have penetrated the Eastern Illinois University campus. This discussion is designed to analyze these findings in order to create a more coherent picture of the perceptions and attitudes of students.

Research Questions Three and Four. The third and fourth research questions ask if there are gender differences in relation to perceptions about political correctness and multiculturalism. The results suggest that there are many differences between men and women in relation to all issues presented on the survey instrument. Women are more likely to agree that females of the 1990's are discriminated against, that individuals of certain ethnic backgrounds are discriminated against, and that certain social classes are discriminated against. Whereas, men are less supportive of these notions.

Results showed that women are also supportive of speech codes, which supports Kessler-Harris's (1992) assertion that women are more sensitive about free speech issues. Men view political correctness more negatively than multiculturalism and feel less educated on both issues than their female counterparts. Men also do not report seeing women being discriminated against on the campus at Eastern Illinois University. Overall, women are far more open to the concepts of political correctness, multiculturalism, and support a curriculum requiring multicultural coursework.

Research Questions Five and Six. Research questions five and six deal with differences in political affiliation. Liberals have a positive attitude when it comes to both PC and multiculturalism. These findings support much of the research discussed in the literature review. Liberals are stronger in agreement that discrimination does exist among a certain gender, specific social classes, and races. Ninety-four percent of all liberals surveyed reported strong support for the importance of having a diverse student body. Liberals are supportive of placing more emphasis on communication between the races, on having more education about diversity, and on requiring classes on both diversity and multiculturalism. Liberals see PC as a positive concepts and are supportive of multiculturalism.

On the other hand, conservatives do not feel ethnic groups, women, or social classes are discriminated against.



Conservatives perceive E.I.U. as having a diverse student body, but findings suggest that they do not feel multicultural courses should be required. Conservatives are not supportive of a speech code. More than half of the conservatives who participated support the idea that E.I.U. is a multicultural campus, and feel pressured to be multicultural.

Liberals and conservatives also agree on several points. Both political affiliations agree that one way to fight discrimination is by appropriate use of language. Both groups agree that Affirmative Action has not eliminated discrimination. Liberals and conservatives are also in agreement that a speech code would hamper freedom of speech. Finally, both groups report to hear politically correct terminology being used.

Research Questions Seven and Eight. Differences were observed among the different class standings. The most significant of the differences, those between freshmen and seniors, were the primary focus. However, it is important to note that, while freshmen seemed more supportive of political correctness and multiculturalism, descriptive analyses showed a gradual change in perception from the freshman level all the way up to the senior level.

Seniors had stronger attitudes, both negative and positive, than did their freshmen cohorts. Seniors had higher scores in relation to discrimination questions.



Seniors were in support of the university placing more emphasis on communication between the races, while freshmen seemed neutral on the issue. Half of all seniors strongly disagreed or disagreed with the prospect of creating a speech code. On that same issue, freshmen respondents had far greater neutrality.

Seniors are less likely to be supportive of PC terminology, whereas, freshmen are more likely to practice political correctness in their communication with others. Freshmen feel less educated about multiculturalism than their senior-level peers. Seniors perceive more pressure to be politically correct and multicultural, but do not see multiculturalism as a barrier to communication.

Overall, freshmen are far more neutral, seem less aware of cultural situations, of E.I.U.'s diversity, and of communication between races and genders. "Undecided" responses were not abundant for seniors in this study, as most responded with either strong support, or adamant disagreement. Support for multicultural education and courses on diversity was also observed in both the descriptive and statistical analyses. Finally, seniors seem far more negative about political correctness and supportive of multiculturalism, whereas, freshmen are positive about both concepts.

Limitations. The major limitation of this study stems from its chosen population. Demographics revealed an unequal distribution of males to females. Females

outnumbered males by 30 percent. While the sample had, for the most part, an equal distribution of undergraduates, the number of graduate students was unequal in comparison.

Furthermore, many questions still remain due to the quantitative nature of this study. A qualitative angle could have been pursued to answer remaining questions. Also, since the survey used was original, its validity and reliability could be questioned. Further, the size of the sample could have been expanded to provide a more accurate depiction of the attitudes concerning political correctness and multiculturalism at Eastern Illinois University.

Recommendations For Future Study. Now that a quantitative instrument has been tested on a campus with a relatively homogeneous population of races, it would be interesting to attempt a similar study at a university boasting far greater diversity. A qualitative study could also be included to further deepen the results obtained.

A future research plan could include a preliminary survey asking students to record their perceptions of multiculturalism and political correctness. After results were computed, respondents of the preliminary study could be asked to enroll in a course designed to focus on multicultural issues, awareness of diversity, and education involving how language perpetuates stereotypes and discrimination. Once students completed the seminar course, they would again be tested. This post-test would attempt to

identify students' perception' and attitudes about political correctness, multiculturalism, diversity, discrimination, and the use of speech codes. Data from the post-test would be analyzed to determine whether students' perceptions' changed after taking the seminar.

Research could also focus on the question of why students (primarily white students) have these perceptions. This question could be answered by a follow-up analyses if the study were to be replicated.

Conclusion. While this study has its limitations, it is important to remember this is one of the first attempts to define perceptions and attitudes of political correctness and multiculturalism by quantitative means. The interest in education about cultural awareness, and the support for it, on the campus at Eastern Illinois University should be further pursued by researchers, faculty, staff, and the administration.

With a country filled with a diverse array of races, classes, and even cultures, the issues of both political correctness and multiculturalism should be on every researcher's agenda-- especially concerning Higher Education. Students come to colleges and universities to obtain a higher level of intellectual, professional and personal satisfaction. While a student can boast that he/she has attended a plethora of classes, that same student is only truly prepared for life in the "real

world" when he/she is educated about the complex, diversity-ridden, multicultural workforce that composes this country. It is like Pang (1994) states, "we need to create a learning environment that ensures success for all students, but teachers must first examine issues of race, class, and gender that may hinder that goal (p. 92).

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## Appendix A

## Survey Instrument

Directions. This survey is comprised of 40 items concerning perceptions and attitudes about political correctness and multiculturalism. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale: (A) strongly agree, (B) agree, (C) undecided, (D) disagree, or (E) strongly disagree. Work quickly; record your first impression.

1. In the 1990's women are discriminated against.
2. In the 1990's individuals of certain ethnic backgrounds are discriminated against.
3. In the 1990's certain social classes are discriminated against.
4. One way to fight discrimination is through appropriate use of communication.
5. In the 1990's affirmative action has, in general, eliminated discrimination at the university level.
6. Women are discriminated against on Eastern's campus.
7. People of certain ethnic backgrounds are discriminated against on Eastern's campus.
8. It is good to have a diverse student body.
9. E.I.U.'s student body has a diverse group of races.
10. This university needs to place more emphasis on communication between the races.
11. This university needs to place more emphasis on communication between males and females.



12. A speech code punishes certain types of hate rhetoric.  
E.I.U. should create a speech code.
  13. The use of a speech code would hamper our freedom of speech.
  14. The use of a speech code would promote a positive environment for all races, ethnicities, and genders.
  15. We need more education involving the topic of diversity on this campus.
  16. Courses on diversity should be required at E.I.U.
- Political Correctness: The following items are listed to measure your perceptions about political correctness.
17. Choi & Murphy (1992) define political correctness as,  
"consisting of theories and practices that are designed to end injustices based on sex, race, class, and other social variables." Choi and Murphy's definition of political correctness is an adequate definition.
  18. "Political correctness," is a positive concept.
  19. I regularly practice political correctness in my communication with others.
  20. Political correctness eliminates discrimination.
  21. Political correctness eliminates stereotyping.
  22. Political correctness creates a barrier to communication.
  23. I feel pressured to use politically correct terminology.
  24. I often hear others using politically correct terminology.

25. The term "political correctness" reflects a conservative backlash against multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism: The following items are listed to measure your perceptions about multiculturalism.

26. Bernstein (1994) defines multiculturalism as, "a sensitivity of openness to the enormous cultural differences that has always been suppressed by the dominant European culture."
27. I believe in multiculturalism.
28. E.I.U. is a multicultural campus.
29. It is a worthwhile goal to have a multicultural campus.
30. I am not adequately educated about multiculturalism.
31. It is important to be educated about multiculturalism.
32. E.I.U. should promote multiculturalism.
33. Multiculturalism creates barriers to communication.
34. Individuals are pressured to be multicultural on this campus.
35. The term "multiculturalism" is an attempt by the liberals to cover a coercive liberal agenda.

Demographic Information: The following items are listed for demographic purposes. Please fill them out completely.

36. Please indicate your year in school:
- (A) Freshman (B) Sophomore (C) Junior (D) Senior
- (E) Graduate
37. Please indicate your gender:
- (A) Male (B) Female

38. Please indicate your political affiliation:

(A) Conservative (B) Liberal (C) Independent (D) Other

39. Please indicate your race:

(A) African American (B) Hispanic (C) Native American

(D) Pacific Islander (E) White

40. Please indicate your age range:

(A) 17-18 (B) 19-20 (C) 21-23 (D) 24 and over

## Appendix B

(including mean scores of entire population)

Directions. This survey is comprised of 40 items concerning perceptions and attitudes about political correctness and multiculturalism. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale: (A) strongly agree, (B) agree, (C) undecided, (D) disagree, or (E) strongly disagree. Work quickly; record your first impression.

1. In the 1990's women are discriminated against. (2.5)
2. In the 1990's individuals of certain ethnic backgrounds are discriminated against. (1.9)
3. In the 1990's certain social classes are discriminated against. (2.0)
4. One way to fight discrimination is through appropriate use of communication. (1.8)
5. In the 1990's affirmative action has, in general, eliminated discrimination at the university level. (3.4)
6. Women are discriminated against on Eastern's campus. (3.1)
7. People of certain ethnic backgrounds are discriminated against on Eastern's campus. (2.6)
8. It is good to have a diverse student body. (1.7)
9. E.I.U.'s student body has a diverse group of races. (2.6)
10. This university needs to place more emphasis on communication between the races. (2.3)
11. This university needs to place more emphasis on communication between males and females. (2.6)

12. A speech code punishes certain types of hate rhetoric.

E.I.U. should create a speech code. (3.3)

13. The use of a speech code would hamper our freedom of speech. (2.3)

14. The use of a speech code would promote a positive environment for all races, ethnicities, and genders. (3.2)

15. We need more education involving the topic of diversity on this campus. (2.5)

16. Courses on diversity should be required at E.I.U. (3.1)

Political Correctness: The following items are listed to measure your perceptions about political correctness.

17. Choi & Murphy (1992) define political correctness as, "consisting of theories and practices that are designed to end injustices based on sex, race, class, and other social variables." Choi and Murphy's definition of political correctness is an adequate definition. (2.3)

18. "Political correctness," is a positive concept. (2.5)

19. I regularly practice political correctness in my communication with others. (2.7)

20. Political correctness eliminates discrimination. (3.5)

21. Political correctness eliminates stereotyping. (3.4)

22. Political correctness creates a barrier to communication. (2.8)

23. I feel pressured to use politically correct terminology. (3.1)

24. I often hear others using politically correct terminology. (2.7)

25. The term "political correctness" reflects a conservative backlash against multiculturalism. (3.0)

Multiculturalism: The following items are listed to measure your perceptions about multiculturalism.

26. Bernstein (1994) defines multiculturalism as, "a sensitivity of openness to the enormous cultural differences that has always been suppressed by the dominant European culture." (2.5)
27. I believe in multiculturalism. (2.2)
28. E.I.U. is a multicultural campus. (2.7)
29. It is a worthwhile goal to have a multicultural campus. (2.1)
30. I am not adequately educated about multiculturalism. (2.7)
31. It is important to be educated about multiculturalism. (2.1)
32. E.I.U. should promote multiculturalism. (2.3)
33. Multiculturalism creates barriers to communication. (3.2)
34. Individuals are pressured to be multicultural on this campus. (3.3)
35. The term "multiculturalism" is an attempt by the liberals to cover a coercive liberal agenda. (3.1)

Demographic Information: The following items are listed for demographic purposes. Please fill them out completely.

36. Please indicate your year in school: (2.7)
- (A) Freshman (B) Sophomore (C) Junior (D) Senior
- (E) Graduate
37. Please indicate your gender: (1.6)
- (A) Male (B) Female

38. Please indicate your political affiliation: (2.3)  
(A) Conservative (B) Liberal (C) Independent (D) Other
39. Please indicate your race: (4.6)  
(A) African American (B) Hispanic (C) Native American  
(D) Pacific Islander (E) White
40. Please indicate your age range: (2.4)  
(A) 17-18 (B) 19-20 (C) 21-23 (D) 24 and over